

The Brethren Evangelist

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The New Year.

With this number of THE EVANGELIST a new volume is commenced. It wishes a happy New Year to all its faithful readers, and will be better than ever as a church paper, and its faithfulness to the unbound freedom of the gospel of Christ, stronger than usual. It stands firmly to the principle that the New Testament is the all-sufficient rule of Christian faith and practice, that Trine Immersion is the true baptism of the Christian church, that a feast and the bread and cup, as an undivided one, constitute the Supper of the Lord, that Footwashing is an ordinance of the Lord's house, and stands as the emblem of love which is the core of gospel religion. It will do what it can for the development of truth and the progress of the work.

And faithful reader, may God enable you to open a volume of honor, as you commence the New Year.

And may love, harmony, goodwill and mercy inspire all our thoughts of one another.

The Office of Bishop and Presbyter.

Some time ago it was stated in these columns that there was little or no difference between the office of Bishop and Presbyter or Elder. We promised to consider the subject in the future, and to discharge that promise is the object of this article.

In the investigation of a subject, for definiteness, with a desired end in view, it is always wise to have a proposition to establish or to controvert; and for this article, the following is stated:

"The bishop and elder are one in the Bible."

In the little space than can be occupied with an article of this character, an exhaustive examination is impossible. Little more than a few assertions can be presented.

The Bishop and Presbyter, in the Bible are one. In the old bible, the Greek word translated bishop, was used in speaking of public officers, civil and religious. In the Septuagint text, Numbers 4:16, the reading is equivalent to—"And to the bishop—Episcopos—of Eleazer the son of Aaron."

Substitute officer for bishop, and you have the common rendering. It occurs again in Num. 31:14. And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host—with the bishops of the host. In the same way the Bible employs Presbyter—Presbuteros—Elder. Numbers 11:16; Jer. 19:1. Thus we have in the Septuagint, the father of the language of the New Testament Greek, episcopus and presbuteros, translated officers and priests, meaning exactly the same in official dignity. Thus the language came to the New Testament writers, and so they passed it upon their immortal pages.

No distinction is made between the words in the New Testament, as to the dignity or superiority of the office. Episcopos and episcopus occur only a few times in the Greek New Testament. Luke 19:44, it means office, so also in Acts 1:20.

Acts 20:28, in a straight forward translation will read: "Over which the Holy Ghost has made you Bishops." This is as far as we need to go. Here we have evidence that men were bishops by the ministration or authority of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 20:17, we find those same brethren were presbuteros—elders. They were made bishops by the Holy Ghost, and in that office they were elders. There is no distinction whatever there.

Again, in Titus, 1:5 and 1:7, the two titles are applied to the same persons. Titus was left to set things in order and ordain elders, then is added, "for a bishop must be blameless." In those passages where the church officers are spoken of, bishops and deacons are only mentioned, plainly showing that no office between them existed. There is not a single evidence of a distinction between the two in the New Testament, and where information only is sought, this is satisfactory.

In the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, the earliest, Clement, uses the two words indiscriminately. He was a co-laborer with the apostles and had the apostolic idea. Ignatius makes the episcopal, or the office of bishop distinct, but against him stands the scriptures, Polycarp and Clement.

That a distinction was made very early, it is folly to deny. But just when no one knows. It probably came into the church like many other innovations. The probable combination of circumstances that developed it were these. The idea of centralization existed in the principles of government held by many at that time, and with this the natural love of power was associated in outlining the polity of the church. The gospel order was to govern churches by an elder or a board of elders. Usually the latter. The apostles always write that "the elders of the church were called." There was naturally strife among them, as to whom should be the most honored. The rivalry and jealousy retarded the work of the churches, and a remedy was sought to remove the difficulty. The title of bishop was exalted above that given to it by the apostles, and a sort of kingly authority invested therein. The elders were then placed under and subject to this supreme ruler, and thereby their rivalry,

jealousies and envy were prevented from developing church parties and feuds, as the case was where several men stood upon an equal official footing in the church, and envied one another. The design was no doubt good, originally, but the principle was abused, and became the foundation of all the terror, crime and murder under the satannic rulings of popery.

Each one of the churches founded by the apostles, elected its own pastors direct, in the exercise of their free suffrage. They cast their vote by raising the hand as is often done now. This election was the power of ordination, which was lodged in the local church, and this ordination of the pastor consisted in his election. The laying on of hands was not a constituent part of ordination. It was not a ceremony or ordinance in the church that was regularly practiced as a fixed observance, but performed where it seemed proper to the Holy Ghost and the brethren.

There is no solid foundation in the scriptures for the hierarchy that now exists under the patronage of several denominations. They exist by the authority of man rather than God.

An ordination ceremony is very nice, and very appropriate too in a denomination with systematized methods, and as it is said that there is order in the house of the Lord, and that God is the author of order, an ordination service, when properly kept and not abused in elevating untrue, unfaithful and unrighteous men to confidence, is now very important, both as a protection to the reputation and rights of the true minister, and a protection to the confidence, of members, and against imposition upon churches. Where hands are laid upon faithless, dishonest persons, it becomes an insult to God and a shame to the church.

Where zealous, hateful, envious, suspecting and surmising ministers are trying to work together, a bishop, in the measure established by popery, may be necessary, and if he is a good man, use his power to good effect, but the office in that character, is neither gospel nor apostolic.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The *Christian Cynosure*, the able anti-secrecy advocate of Chicago, paid an appropriate tribute to the memory of Peter Howe and wife, who were murdered at their home in Illinois, by publishing their portrait. His life was taken because he waged a good warfare against sin. Before his death he did the commendable deed of securing to each of his grand-children a small annuity, to be paid, with interest, at their majority if they never drank liquor, used tobacco, or joined a secret society.

A Deaconesses' home, or a home for aged sisters and widows is soon to be erected in New York by the Methodist church. After Ashland College is paid for, a home for superannuated ministers, and one for sisters and orphans are works that should receive our attention.

The College Boarding Hall will make a most excellent orphan's home, and we expect to see the day when it will contain many of the orphan children of our brethren and sisters, who will be taught useful trades, filled with zeal and the doctrines of the gospel, and then sent out to preach Christ and his word. This could soon be done if our departing ones who have wealth will donate a part for that purpose. Who will be the first one to give a hundred dollars for that purpose?

The war of the ballots in Boston resulted in a defeat of the Catholics. It was a square issue between Protestants and Catholics, and while the Protestants were victors, yet a majority of only 2,000 in a city as large as Boston, is very insignificant and forbodes evil for the cities of the Union in a few years.

The Supreme Court, of Kansas, has decided that the Salvation Army has a right to parade the streets, use banners, beat drums and sing for meritorious purposes. This we are glad to know. There never has been an objection raised against the devil's parades, and when that valiant band beat drums in the work for Christ, they should be left alone.

The article and poetry by our saintly old sister, Susan Sidle, last week, were interesting because they came from one who has reached well nigh one hundred years of life. Yet with a steady hand she writes the truths of the gospel of Christ. It is a joy to the heart to learn of one so old still holding out a beacon light to the races moving on to eternity.

Elder Isaac Erret, for many years Editor of the *Christian Standard*, probable the leading paper of the Disciples of Christ, died recently. He was an able editor and active in advancing the interests of that denomination.

The Jerusalem Talmud is now being published in France. Many points of interest are to be found in those works, to christian students, and in a few years the English speaker will be able to study "the traditions of the elders."

The next yearly meeting of the Old Order Brethren, or old German Baptists will be held near Pittsburg, Ohio, June 10-12, 1889. The *Vindicator* says "preparations are making to have a good meeting."

"Pittsburg, Ohio," seems to be a favorite place for Tunker annual meetings. One is held by some branch in that locality every few years.

A brother away up in Michigan writes us that he is two hundred miles from his church in a hard neighborhood, and is having a struggle. It would certainly be much better for many if they would remain where there are church privileges. Contentment with godliness is great gain, and where a brother's family can make a living, there they should be content if their church privileges are good. The continual shifting about in search of a mine of wealth is not the best thing for spiritual growth nor even for improving situations in a temporal sense. The privilege of attending your own church should always be a chief consideration when a change of habitation is considered.

We gladly give space to Bro. Gan's letter this week. It is a satisfaction to see brethren talk about doing something and remind others of their duty, even if little is performed; but the satisfaction will be much greater in seeing work done. The Pennsylvania State Convention was a splendid meeting, and some good work is expected to follow as a result of the organization effected. That is right, brethren, make the work move on.

"Perfection was not of the Levitical Priesthood," declares St. Paul. Even the Lord had to institute some imperfect things to bring about his desired ends in redeeming the human family. Men, therefore, should not expect perfection in men, and exercise charity. How soon would thousands be cut off from the right to eternal life if God were as exacting of them as they are of their brethren.

The New Year opens very promisingly for the church.

Brother Brumbaugh is, comparatively, a new writer for the EVANGELIST, and it is good to know that he takes hold of practical subjects.

"Excommunication," by Daniel Miller, and "The Cities of the Plains," by A. A. Cober, are articles soon to appear.

The usual rule of writers is to use ordinary paged paper, numbering the pages on the upper right hand corner, and never fasten them together in any way.

Articles of correspondence from Bro. Josiah Brindle, M. D. Watson and George Clum are on hand, but they could not be used this week.

If a good resolution has been made, do not cease trying to carry it into effect all the year if it cannot be done in the start.

Jones Mills, Pa.

Our meeting at this place is now among the things of the past. Some of the members of the church were deprived of attending the meetings on account of sickness, yet we had one of the most pleasant meetings I ever enjoyed. Our communion meeting was held on Sunday evening, Dec. 23rd. I must say that we had the best of order from the first meeting to the last.

During the meetings, sister Harman took sick very suddenly, which not only deprived her but brother Harman also from attending. In almost every prayer offered there was a pleading with the Father in her behalf. We had meeting again on Christmas evening and on entering the church we were somewhat surprised to see the front seats laden with sacks of flour, baskets, bundles, etc. After meeting I asked what all this meant, when I got a general response that it all belonged to the preacher and that it was freely presented as a token of respect. Thanks to all for kindness shown. With sorrow I write the following:

Sister Harman, wife of Eld. W. A. Harman, of this place, died this morning, Dec. 26th.

STEPHEN HILDEBRAND.

Ministerial Supply.

As Bro. McFaden has given only a brief notice of the organization of the committee of M. S., elected by the Johnstown Convention, I will give a little explanation.

After corresponding with the other members we finally effected the following organization: viz., Bro. McFaden, Philadelphia, Pa., Chairman; Dr. U. M. Beachly, Myersdale, Pa., Consulting Physician, and myself Secretary.

Ministers desiring locations or churches desiring pastoral assistance can apply to any of us, but the records will be kept by the Secretary.

Our work has been clearly defined and we are ready and anxious to serve. As it is to be a work of co-operation, I trust that our brethren will do all in their power to aid in the work. Just read Bro. Spanogle's preamble once more and then get to work and remedy this state of affairs. And what has become of the committee of Church Extension and Missions? It seems to me that these committees can do a great deal of efficient work and mutually aid each other. Has there been anything done?

But to the subject in hand, I suppose the names and addresses of the ministers are in the Annual. If however any have been omitted let me know, as I desire a complete list. As to the names and locations of churches I wish the ministers of the various congregations to send me a list of their appointments, also any churches that are not supplied.

One brother has already written to me concerning a charge, but as there are no calls yet I cannot do anything at present.

In conclusion, let me urge all to assist in this work. The harvest is plenteous and will not be held responsible if for lack of labor any should perish? Pray and work that the Lord of the harvest may have an abundance of laborers in his fields gathering the sheaves of eternal life.

W. G. GANS.

Uniontown, Pa.

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